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**CLAIMS:**

(43)

1. A method for screening ~~the~~ a GABA<sub>A</sub> receptor modulator for its potential as a sedative or anxiolytica, which method comprises the following steps:
  - 5 a) exposing the compound to a test animal by administration; and
  - b) measuring the effect of the compound on the activity of the HPA axis.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the test animal is a mouse or a rat.
- 10 3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the measurement of the activity of the HPA axis is performed by measuring, in a blood sample from the test animal after administration, the level of plasma corticosterone and/or ACTH.
4. The method according to any one of claims 1-3, comprising the further step:
  - 15 c1) selecting the compound as a sedative drug candidate if the compound substantially stimulates the HPA axis.
5. The method according to any one of claims 1-3, comprising the further step:
  - 20 c2) selecting the compound as an anxiolytica drug candidate if the compound has substantially no effect on the HPA axis.
6. A drug development method, which comprises the identification of a compound by the method according to any one of the claims 1-5.
- 25 7. The use of a compound identified as a sedative drug candidate by the method according to any one of the claims 1-4 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for the manufacture of a medicament for inducing anaesthesia, pre-anaesthesia, muscle relaxation, or sedation, or for treatment, prevention or alleviation of fever cramps or status epilepticus in a subject.
- 30 8. The use of a compound identified as an anxiolytic drug candidate by the method according to any one of the claims 1-3 and 5 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment, prevention or alleviation of anxiety.
- 35 9. A method for the treatment, prevention, or alleviation of anxiety comprising administering to said subject a therapeutically effective amount of a compound

identified as a antioilytica by the method according to any one of the claims 1-3 and 5 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

10. A method for inducing anaesthesia, pre-anaesthesia, muscle relaxation, or  
5 sedation, or for treatment, prevention or alleviation of fever cramps or status epilepticus anxiety comprising administering to said subject a therapeutically effective amount of a compound identified as a sedative by the method according to any one of the claims 1-4 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.